

**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE****Form Approved**  
**OMB No. 0704-0188**

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<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 02052011		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Master of Military Studies Research Paper		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> Dec 2010 to Apr 2011	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> The Marine Corps Civil Military Operations (CMO) Capability: Inadequate for Current and Future Irregular Environments.				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Maj Thomas M. Warren				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b> N/A	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> N/A				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b> N/A	
				<b>11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER</b> N/A	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> N/A					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> UU	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College
<b>a. REPORT</b> Unclass	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> Unclass	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> Unclass			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code)</b> (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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THE MARINE CORPS CIVIL MILITARY OPERATIONS CAPABILITY: INADEQUATE  
FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE IRREGULAR SCENARIOS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF


MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Major Thomas M. Warren, USMC

AY 10-11

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Wray R. Johnson, Ph.D.

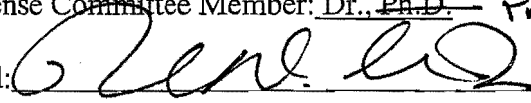
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Paul D. GELPS

Approved: 

Date: 6 May 2011

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## **Preface**

The decision to conduct this particular research project was based on my own incorrect preconceived notions about civil affairs and civil military operations. I generally chose this topic in order to educate myself about a relevant issue within the Marine Corps. I would like to acknowledge the following units and individuals for their assistance in this project and thank them for educating this Marine:

The Marine Corps Center for Irregular Warfare

The Security Cooperation Education Training Center

The LSI USMC Exercise Development Team Lead

The Marine Corps Combat Development Command Civil Affairs Advocate

My Command and Staff College Faculty Advisors

My Thesis Mentor

My Family

## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** The Marine Corps Civil Military Operations (CMO) Capability: Inadequate for Current and Future Irregular Scenarios.

**Author:** Major Thomas M. Warren, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** The Marine Corps' CMO capabilities do not adequately address current irregular warfare environments and need to be enhanced in order to meet the MAGTF commander's requirements in operating in future irregular environments.

**Discussion:** In recent years, irregular threats have influenced how the Marine Corps trains, organizes, and equips its forces. In light of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it has become clear that the Marine Corps has capability gaps in countering irregular threats. One such capability gap is CMO. In order to meet future irregular challenges, the Marine Corps must enhance its CMO capabilities across doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF). While the civil affairs community needs to be bolstered, it is not the sole issue. Commanders are responsible for CMO within their respective battlespace and must be given the appropriate level of support in order to effectively operate in support of governance lines of effort. This support includes each component of the DOTMLPF spectrum. The Marine Corps currently relies on intuitive commanders to effectively employ civil affairs units and conduct CMO in irregular environments. Combat operations will always be the Marine Corps' specialty however, if the Marine Corps is to be successful in future wars, "conventional" or "irregular", it must enhance its ability to conduct CMO across the range of military operations.

**Conclusion:** The Marine Corps' Civil Affairs community possesses a limited cadre of subject matter experts and requires more structure in order to assist commanders in employing such capabilities. Until the civil affairs military occupational specialty (MOS) becomes a primary MOS and permanent force structure is built into the maneuver battalion and logistics combat element tables of organization, an institutionalized capability and mindset will not be achieved. Placing greater emphasis on training for stability operations will enhance commanders' ability to conduct successful operations across the range of military operations.

## Introduction

Civil Military Operations (CMO) is a term not generally associated with the United States Marine Corps. The term often presumes a long term obligation, evoking images of military occupations such as Haiti in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Japan and Germany during post-World War II reconstruction efforts. It also represents a non-lethal solution to military problem solving for which the Marine Corps is not very well known. The Marine Corps is, however, widely known as an expeditionary force capable of providing a rapid response to global emergencies. Its relationship with the United States Navy allows it to project power and provide deterrence on behalf of United States policy. The Marine Corps is designed to operate in austere conditions for a short period of time and then return to the sea or from whence it came. The title Marine Corps usually evokes images of decisive combat operations in expeditionary settings.

The Marine Corps does, however, possess a small CMO capability, including subject matter experts. Moreover, the Marine Corps' Training and Education Command (TECOM) has also refined deployment training to reflect civil considerations and has introduced the topic in curricula throughout the Marine Corps schools system. These developments were, in part, a response to a unified effort within the Department of Defense (DOD) to develop solutions to counter irregular threats, i.e., "small wars" of the type associated with Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report and 2010 Joint Operating Environment Reports, as well as the 2011 National Military Strategy contend and numerous analysts posit, that the United States will continue to prosecute irregular warfare or a "hybrid" of conventional and irregular warfare well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In that regard, CMO will remain an important force multiplier in countering these threats and can make a far greater contribution to success than



traditional “kinetic” military solutions. Yet, despite these improvements, the Marine Corps has not institutionalized a CMO capability. Therefore, in the end, Marine Corps’ CMO capabilities do not adequately address the current and future irregular warfare threat and must be enhanced in order to meet the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Commander’s requirements for operating in future irregular scenarios.

## **Background**

Misconceptions about CMO run rampant within the Marine Corps. There are indeed senior Marine officers who believe that, within a counterinsurgency or stability operation, maneuver units conduct combat and security operations and civil affairs Marines and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) conduct civil military operations. The current command relationship between commanders in an area of operation (AO) and PRTs perpetuates this notion.<sup>2</sup> Marines also tend to believe that, in a high intensity conflict on a traditional battlefield, civil military considerations do not become a factor until after combat operations have been terminated and the “stabilization” phase has commenced.<sup>3</sup> Aside from CMO practitioners and planners, very few Marines are even aware that civil affairs is not solely a type of operation but a type of unit.<sup>4</sup> Civil Affairs Marines who have deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have expended a lot of energy attempting to change these perceptions. And yet, these perceptions are symptomatic of a much bigger problem; there is currently very little CMO force structure and an absence of an institutional commitment to CMO within the Marine Corps. Despite the prevalence of DOD Directives, strategic vision statements, think tank reports, and the ruminations of various luminaries that the United States will be involved in irregular warfare throughout the remainder of the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Marine Corps has only taken very small steps to change its institutional aversion to CMO. That said, the Marine Corps is fully

aware that, in order to counter irregular and asymmetric threats including insurgencies, transnational criminal organizations, and the like, it must focus on new and different core competencies, including civil military operations. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps has not submitted any substantial funding requirements in the previous two cycles for CMO type initiatives nor has it made significant changes to its active duty force structure.

One way to measure The Marine Corps commitment to improve CMO is to be found in the Projected Objective Memorandum (POM) process and in force structure.<sup>5</sup> Each paints a troubling picture. Marine Corps capabilities are lacking across the DOTMLPF spectrum. Indeed, the Marine Corps currently possesses two reserve Civil Affairs Groups (CAG), the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> CAGs. Headquartered in Washington DC, the 4<sup>th</sup> CAG primarily supports Second Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) operations and 3<sup>rd</sup> CAG, headquartered in Camp Pendleton, California, supports I MEF operations. In addition, both provide civil affairs teams to support activities in Latin America. Each unit is comprised of 156 Marines but very little equipment. Actually, roughly one half of the Marines assigned to these units are considered to be Civil Affairs Marines while the remainder conduct various administrative and support functions.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), two additional provisional CAGs were stood up, but have since been disbanded. Moreover, to supplement CMO capabilities, Artillery battalions were transformed into Civil Affairs units. Indeed, since 2003, civil affairs has been regarded as a “high demand, low density” MOS. However, the Marine Corps force structure has in reality changed little to reflect this emphasis on CMO. Growth in the force structure has been measured primarily by the addition of a Civil Affairs Detachment, containing 153 Marines possessing the civil affairs secondary MOS, within each of the three active duty artillery regiments. Thus, the

Marine Corps has opted to maintain civil affairs as a secondary MOS in the reserve and active forces. The above said, the Force Structure Review Group (FSRG) has called for the addition of two Reserve CAGs.<sup>6</sup> But, at the same time, the FSRG has also called for the reduction in the number of active duty artillery battalions by two. In effect, the changes to force structure have been a “wash”. The Marine Corps currently has some 200 active duty Marines serving in CA billets with the secondary MOS.

In 2009, the Marine Corps launched its own Civil Affairs secondary MOS school. Typically, units preparing to deploy to Afghanistan send Marines to the Civil Affairs School in order to learn how to integrate CMO considerations into planning efforts. Previously, Marines who have been charged with running Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOC) were often rushed to Iraq with no more than two weeks training. In some cases, Regimental Combat Teams (RCT) deploying to Afghanistan have made the conscious decision to not fill civil affairs billets within the staff. And Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), the basic combat unit of the Marine Corps, will in the future, be losing the only two civil affairs billets from the staff structure.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the shortfalls discussed above, the crux of the matter does not revolve around civil affairs units or Marines trained in CMO. Civil Affairs Marines do not typically participate in patrols engaging with local populations. This is the duty of the Marines of the maneuver battalions and that is where CMO efforts must be focused. One must also keep in mind that civil military operations are not tied specifically to irregular warfare or stability and reconstruction operations. They are important across the range of military operations. Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil Military Operations*, defines Civil Military Operations as “the activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly,

neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational US objectives.”<sup>8</sup> Just like the irregular battlefield, the traditional battlefield is littered with a civilian population. During the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Marines were required to deal with civilians, including displaced civilians and ordinary citizens trying to avoid being caught in the crossfire. The inadequate handling of these civilians helped fuel the insurgency that emerged later. Very little thought has been given to CMO in terms of its role on the traditional battlefield. Civil military considerations were never part of the Marine Corps’ former premiere warfighting exercise, the combined arms exercises at 29 Palms, California. Frankly, the training areas were never realistic in the absence of “civilians” in the battlespace.<sup>9</sup> Today, civil military considerations are built into training scenarios at the Marine Corps’ pre-deployment culminating training event, enhanced Mojave viper, but in many cases, this is a Marine’s first exposure to these concepts.

## **History**

Civil Military Operations are as old as war itself. The Romans could not have conquered and maintained their vast empire without CMO. Roman generals were skilled artisans in military rule and knew when to “crush” a population and when to “appease” it.<sup>10</sup> Arguably, the ancient military philosopher Sun Tsu had CMO in mind when he wrote “attack the strategy of the enemy, not the enemy’s army”.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, despite its current CMO limitations, the Marine Corps possesses a rich history of experience with CMO. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Marine Corps was heavily engaged in small wars the Caribbean, and Central America, known as “The Banana Wars.” These expeditionary actions included military governance, raising local constabularies, civic actions such as building roads, improving sanitation, and running local elections. There were no specialized units to conduct these

operations in addition to kinetic military operations. Every Marine, and in particular Marine officers, were expected to develop CMO skills ranging from leading police to running towns. Although their training was essentially on the job through trial and error, their experiences were codified in the Marine Corps *Small Wars Manual*, first published in 1935 and revised in 1940.<sup>12</sup>

The Marine Corps' *Small Wars Manual* documents the successes achieved during the Banana Wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Critics of the *Small Wars Manual* who consider it to be outdated are missing the point of its timelessness. Moreover, its supporters who only make connections between horseback-riding special operations forces in Afghanistan in 2001 and the chapter on how to saddle a mule also miss the point. The *Small Wars Manual* contains enduring principles that have withstood the test of time. Indeed, whenever the Marine Corps has faced an irregular challenge, the manual has been dusted off and re-published as "one of the best books on military operations in peacekeeping and counterinsurgency operations" ever published.<sup>13</sup> The manual's recommendations regarding dealing with civilian populations, though often couched in the racist terminology of the era in which it was written, still apply and the manual has come in handy for those wise commanders who, without formal small wars training, used it to navigate their way through uncertain conditions. For example, in Iraq in May, 2003, the commander of the First Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Conlin, referred to the *Small Wars Manual* to plan for elections in Najaf, roughly 160 kilometers south of Baghdad. These elections were to be the "test bed" for some 60 future elections held over the next three months throughout 18 Iraqi provinces. Unfortunately, these elections were postponed which furthered the unstable situation in Iraq.<sup>14</sup>

## Terms of Reference

In 2005, DOD Directive 3000.05 required all of the military departments to give stability operations a status comparable to combat operations across the DOTMLPF spectrum.<sup>15</sup> Four years later that directive was replaced with DOD Instruction (3000.05) which encouraged the military departments to develop and maintain scalable activities and capacities to establish civil security and civil control, restore essential services, repair critical infrastructure, and provide humanitarian relief across the range of military activities.<sup>16</sup> Civil Military Operations are at the very core of Stability Operations, but the Marine Corps has hardly modified its force structure or submitted a POM related to civil military operations.<sup>17</sup> With that in mind, and using the DOTMLPF concept as a framework of analysis the following highlights current initiatives and shortfalls for civil military operations in the Marine Corps:

## Doctrine

Current tasks associated with the Civil Affairs MOS are outdated, invalid, and not aligned with Joint Publication 3-57.1, *Civil Military Operations*. In addition, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.1, which details the CMO mission for the MAGTF, is also outdated and not aligned with joint doctrine.<sup>18</sup> Marine Corps logistics doctrinal publications list civil affairs under “services”, one of the six functions of tactical logistics. Although certainly a tactical mission, CMO is often generally associated with the operational level of war and is arguably a MEF function in addition to a lower echelon function. To make matters worse, current Marine Corps doctrine does not address the challenge of CMO in the irregular environment, or small wars. This leads to confusion regarding how to employ civil affairs units, determining who is responsible for civil military operations, and how to implement CMO tactics, techniques, and procedures. Fortunately, Marine Corps Combat Development Command

(MCCDC) is updating the doctrine and aligning it with overarching joint doctrine. Moreover, a new draft manual for the MAGTF is being staffed within MCCDC. It addresses the complex challenge of irregular warfare and nests with complementary publications such as FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency Operations*.<sup>19</sup>

The Marine Corps Center for Irregular Warfare has taken major steps forward in developing Marine Corps stability operations doctrine, exploiting and adapting emergent US Army doctrine regarding irregular warfare.<sup>20</sup> In that regard, the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Education and Training Center employs US Army, Marine Corps, as well as joint doctrine to develop solutions to irregular threats and has recently crafted a draft CMO manual for the MAGTF to use at the CMO MOS school.

## **Organization**

Until recently, the entire Marine Corps civil affairs community resided in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> CAGs in Washington, DC, and California. The active component now possesses a small civil affairs structure within each MEF. In that regard, the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiments each have a civil affairs detachment assigned to its headquarters batteries. Moreover, III MEF has absorbed a small civil affairs detachment into its own command element. To institutionalize this change, a request has been made to Headquarters Marine Corps to change the table of organization for each MEF to oversee manning, training, and equipping at the MAGTF level.<sup>21</sup> There are also two CMO planner billets within the Infantry Regiment and MEU tables of organization. Filling these billets, however, has been inconsistent. In some cases, the regiments have decided to use the additional manpower authorizations for non-CMO activities. Other regiments have on occasion only filled the CMO planner billets just prior to deployment, which misses the whole

point in terms of integrating civil-military considerations into mission planning, rehearsals and training exercises.

Despite the initiatives outlined above, the Marine Corps plans to eliminate the CMO planner structure within the MEU headquarters by 2012. In short, there will be no permanent institutional CMO element assigned to maneuver battalions. Civil affairs teams consisting of seven Marines will be assigned to maneuver battalions for deployments. But they will come from the Reserve Component CAGs and artillery regiments or, in the case of III MEF, the MEF headquarters. Such units and individual Marines will not always be able to participate in pre-deployment planning and training.<sup>22</sup>

In the end, the active component force structure for CMO was an ad hoc affair and it shows.<sup>23</sup> The 2010 force enabler study identified a gap of four seven-man civil affairs teams to support steady-state operations. Therefore, the Marine Corps is exploring a growth of 54 additional active civil affairs Marines to compensate for the capability gap.<sup>24</sup> Whether this will perpetuate the ad hoc approach seen thus far remains to be seen.

## **Training**

Since 2009, Civil Affairs Marines have been receiving training as a secondary MOS at a small schoolhouse. But the school has a limited budget and little time to provide comprehensive training in the five core civil affairs tasks. Thus, graduates of the school matriculate with only a 1000 level CMO certification. Post-graduate continuing education regarding the CMO mission is haphazard and generally a consequence of personal initiative. And CMO education for non-Civil Affairs officers and noncommissioned officers is sorely lacking. For example, CMO is not currently part of volume II Ground Combat Element (GCE) common training and readiness tasks. There is also limited CMO exercise play at MEF mission rehearsal exercises and at



exercises such as “Enhanced Mojave Viper”.<sup>25</sup> While Civil Affairs Marines are but one component of civil military operations, commanders are responsible for its employment and their forces must be adept regarding how to prosecute such missions and integrate them with security or combat operations.

## **Materiel**

The Marine Corps currently has a limited capability to conduct civil information management.<sup>26</sup> Many commanders confuse civil information with military intelligence.<sup>27</sup> Generally, civil information supports civic actions while intelligence supports military actions. In addition to a conceptual issue, this is also a software issue. There is currently no approved Marine Corps software program that enables CMO planners to efficiently manage civil information and provide commanders with relevant civil information to be incorporated into tactical planning or campaign design. This is actually a Joint problem as illustrated by the number of Theater Combatant Commands using different software programs.<sup>28</sup> There is also no capacity to share information across the interagency. Thus, for example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) developed and submitted an urgent universal needs statement to purchase eight separate systems. The Marine Corps is, however, working to develop a long term solution but funding competes with other initiatives.<sup>29</sup>

The civil affairs Active Component table of organization was developed without table of equipment considerations. In fact, there is no table of equipment assigned to the Active Component civil affairs structure. In training exercises and operations, Civil Affairs units are therefore generally resented for their lack of transportation, communications, and security assets. The Reserve Component civil affairs groups similarly lack equipment. For example, there is currently no table of equipment for neither biometrics equipment nor civil information

management software. Likewise, transportation, communications, and security assets are limited and often antiquated. This does not encourage confidence in the capabilities of the civil affairs community within the MAGTF.

## **Leadership and Education**

According to one authority, "Knowledge of the proper employment and understanding of capability of USMC civil affairs is sporadic at best by leaders."<sup>30</sup> As noted before, outside of the limited cadre of CMO "experts," most Marine learn CMO on the job and the commanders that have proven successful have been so more as a consequence of their own intuition rather than any programmatic study. That said, TECOM is slowly integrating CMO considerations into schoolhouse curricula, both in terms of training and education.

In addition to limited education and training, Marines have little exposure to CMO in the context of the interagency. Very few Marines ever work within or with the Foreign Service community, Agriculture, etc., and have little to no knowledge of their processes. And yet the interagency issue permeates the DOTMLPF spectrum. Exposure to functional and regional experts in the interagency is important and will enable Marine leaders to leverage capabilities not resident within the Marine Corps. TECOM has begun to address this issue in education but the challenge is daunting.

## **Personnel**

The greatest challenge to the CMO capability within the Marine Corps is that the civil affairs specialty is only a secondary MOS. Thus, once Marines have been indoctrinated with a civil affairs mindset, there is no obligation to remain in the community. Active and Reserve Marines with the civil affairs secondary MOS often bounce back and forth between billets in their primary MOS and civil affairs billets. In many cases, Civil Affairs Marines never return to

civil affairs billets. Consequently, their experience and expertise is lost. Interestingly, and to their detriment, Civil Affairs Marines have little exposure to general purpose Marine forces due to the lack of permanent structure within maneuver battalions. Teams are only assigned to maneuver battalions for deployments.

Plugging into the Interagency is key to the success of developing a CMO capability, but the Marine Corps currently has only four liaison officers working within the Interagency. That said, the Marine Corps is aware of the “whole of government approach” and emphasizes the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) elements of national power.

Nevertheless, the Marine Corps has not generally rewarded Marines for filling billets outside of the “mainstream.” It is no secret that Marines who do not follow an informally defined career path often become non-promotable for not serving in the “correct” billets. The foreign area officer program is the best known example for this phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> Thus, there will be little incentive for Marines to serve in billets in the Interagency unless and until the Marine Corps changes its manpower policies with regard to rewarding such assignments in the promotion process. To his credit, the current Commandant of the Marine Corps is aware of this issue and has convened an operational planning team regarding interagency integration.

## **Facilities**

There is no significant requirement for large facilities to support CMO given that the table of equipment is quite small. However, there are problems in the field, generally associated with command, control, communications, and computers (C4) issues and space limitations that generate resentment and misunderstanding between general purpose Marine personnel and Civil Affairs personnel.

## Civil Military Operations Challenges

As detailed above, CMO and military civic action is an important part of military art and science. Joint Pub 3-57 defines military civic actions as “the use of preponderantly indigenous military forces on projects useful to the local population at all levels in such fields as education, training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health, sanitation, and others contributing to economic and social development, which would also serve to improve the standing of the military forces with the population.”<sup>32</sup> These operations are not militarily unique. The State Department, the Agency for International Development, and even the Peace Corps are competent in such activities. International business organizations use similar types of operations to develop natural resources in poorer parts of the globe. For example, oil companies employ engineers to design infrastructure and employ local populations in the projects, which puts the companies in good standing with local citizenry. This allows the oil companies to construct pipelines, terminal facilities, and other projects without alienating to too great an extent the local populace. Ironically, transnational criminal organizations conduct similar types of operations. Drug cartels and organized crime syndicates in Mexico have begun using civil military type operations to win over populations. They have been known to donate money to build and improve schools, churches, and provide social services in poverty stricken areas where the government is viewed as ineffective.<sup>33</sup> This garners popular support and enhances the freedom of action required by the cartels to operate. No criminal is more famous for his civil military type operations than the Colombian “drug lord” Pablo Escobar, who is still considered something of a “saint” in Medellin, Colombia, for the number of schools, soccer fields, hospitals, and churches that he built—despite the drug-fueled reign of terror he is responsible for during the 1980s.<sup>34</sup>

Not unlike the drug cartels in Latin America, radical jihadists and insurgents around the world have also caught on to the benefits of civil military type operations. Hezbollah in particular has created a model organization with respect to the integration of guerrilla operations, terror, and the provision of social services and participation in the political process in Lebanon. This emergent revolutionary model has not gone unnoticed by other insurgent organizations. A key part of the Hezbollah organizational structure is the *Jihad al-Binah*, or Holy Reconstruction Organ. Within this organization resides an agricultural committee, a power resource committee, a water resource committee, an Islamic health committee, a financial aid committee, a reconstruction committee, and an environmental committee. The *Jihad al-Binah* employs its own construction companies, which, between 1988 and 1991, repaired some 1,000 Lebanese homes damaged by Israeli actions.<sup>35</sup> While overshadowed by its military arm, this “CMO” capability consumes half of the Hezbollah budget and has been given credit for getting Hezbollah party members elected to the Lebanese Congress.<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising, then, that a significant proportion of the Lebanese population views Hezbollah as more legitimate than the Lebanese government.

How then can a MAGTF deployed in support of a stability operation or counter-insurgency mission defeat such an organization as Hezbollah? It should come as no surprise that Hezbollah members are not merely uneducated foot soldiers but also well educated individuals with backgrounds in medicine, engineering, economics, administration, and agriculture among many others. These “subject matter experts” have made it abundantly clear that, in irregular warfare, killing guerrillas is far less important than meeting the economic, social, and political needs of the people.<sup>37</sup> Insurgent groups like the Taliban and Hezbollah use their guerrilla fighters and security apparatus as a shield behind which their political message and

developmental efforts can grow and prosper. Contrariwise, US military forces (including the Marine Corps) generally use informational and civil military operations to support combat operations.<sup>38</sup> This tactical and operational asymmetry between Marine forces and their and insurgent adversaries is to the advantage of the insurgents. Marines today can certainly hunt down and kill guerrillas, but unlike their predecessors in the Banana Wars, in terms of worldview, organization, training, and employment in the field, the MAGTF today is not well suited to defeat a powerful political-military organization like Hezbollah.

And yet models and historical examples exist of CMO that can serve to guide adaptation of the MAGTF to meet the challenge of irregular warfare. For example, during the Hukbalahap insurgency that took place in the Philippines between 1946 and 1955, US military advisors assisted the Filipino government to implement a CMO strategy that ultimately led to the defeat of the insurgency. Drawing parallels to the Marine Corps today and the Philippine Army of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century may be unfair in some respects but the campaign design executed to defeat the Huks bears remarkable resemblance to the campaigns waged by the Marines in Haiti, The Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua from during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the principles of which were codified in the *Small Wars Manual*. The reformation of the Filipino armed forces took place amidst a larger reform of the Filipino government. President Ramon Magsaysay, ably advised by USA Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Ed Lansdale and US Army Major "Bo" Bohannon, realized that to defeat the insurgency the government had to attack their strategy, not simply kills Huks in the field. This was completed through a whole of government approach which enfranchised disillusioned Filipino peasants who had previously collaborated with the insurgents for no other reason than they saw no other alternative to redress their grievances. In order to detach popular support for the insurgency and re-attach it to the central government, the

Philippine Army adapted its force structure and revised its tactics.<sup>39</sup> The results resembled “enhanced company operations” today with a “distributed operations” approach. Filipino battalion combat teams and “scout rangers” remained formidable combat soldiers and invariably won every contact with guerrillas but their principal emphasis was to develop intelligence to uncover the insurgent infrastructure and determine effective psychological operations, and a civil military operations approach from the national down to the company level. Over time the Filipino government and the Army was able to drive a wedges between the Huks and the people in favor of the government.<sup>40</sup> In the end, military operations supported civil and psychological operations. The Philippine Army became the shield behind which reforms could undermine the popular appeal of the Huk ideology and programs. The failed Huk insurgency therefore highlights the critical relationship between CMO and security and depicts how an inversion of the insurgent strategy can lead to success.

## **Conclusions**

The late Marine Corps General Victor Krulak stated that “America does not need a Marine Corps—the other Services could manage an adequate defense without us, but America wants a Marine Corps, because it feels safe knowing that there is a band of warriors always ready to respond rapidly, against unknown odds, to any national emergency.”<sup>41</sup> The memory of the battle for Belleau Wood in World War I has faded from the consciousness of the American public and at some point in the future, the battle for Iwo Jima will fade from the public’s memory. And once again the struggle for survival of the Marine Corps as an autonomous branch of the armed services will rear its ugly head. The Marine Corps is currently considering its options for the future, including returning to its amphibious past in the context of World War II and the Cold War, becoming more special operations oriented, and even returning to its roots in

the small wars period between the world wars. The choice made will have profound implications for the Marine Corps. It could turn into one of those “be afraid of what you ask for, you might actually get it” scenarios. Until that decision is reached, Marines will continue to deploy and engage America’s enemies abroad, whether they be guerrillas or regular soldiers. Moreover, Marines will continue to engage in “other than war” scenarios, where humanitarian assistance, suasion, and CMO will dominate military concerns. This is nothing new. The Marines of the 1920s and 1930s understood such skills to be integral to their kit.

The response to the late Victor Krulak’s profound statement will lie in how the Marine Corps transforms itself into a force capable of meeting the expectation of the American people. Throughout the literature of war is found the notion of the Clausewitzian “trinity” between the government, the military, and the people. Regarding the American version of this trinity, General George Marshall, author of the “Marshall Plan” plan following World War II, wrote: “In our democracy where the government is truly an agent of the popular will, military policy is dependent on public opinion, and our organization for war will be good or bad as the public is well informed regarding the factors that bear on the subject.”<sup>42</sup> As public debate continues about bringing the troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq, the Marine Corps prepares itself for its challenge. In that regard, armchair generals and purported theorists will articulate their particular visions of the future of warfare and advocate for specific solutions. This paper is no different.

Where does the Marine Corps go from here? Experts, such as retired Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni and Dr. Colin Gray believe that irregular warfare is here to stay. That is not to say that “conventional” war is obsolete. Indeed, the principal threat seems to be a “hybrid” of regular and irregular warfare (though this is not new; see, for example, any good



treatment of the American Revolution or the French and American experience in Vietnam). Civil Military Operations will be a vital component of any future war, regular, irregular, or hybrid. Past experience shows this to be true and the future looks no different in that regard. Thus, the Marine Corps must enhance its CMO capability to operate in the future operating environment. There are numerous initiatives being explored within MCCDC and each is competing for scarce resources. Civil Military Operations initiatives must therefore compete with such traditional budget busters as fighter aircraft and amphibious assault vehicles. But then the CMO challenge is more of an intellectual issue than a material one. With that in mind, TECOM and Marine Corps University have implemented curricula changes to promote civil-military thinking in the context of future war. While initiatives such as these are important to improving the Marine Corps' competency in countering irregular threats and succeeding on the irregular battlefield, they are in truth only an interim solution in the ad hoc manner of the past.

If the Marine Corps is to improve its effectiveness across the range of military operations, it must undergo serious institutional changes across the DOTMLPF spectrum that should include creating a viable CMO capability. In that regard, the following recommendations offer realistic solutions to institutionalize CMO as a warfighting consideration in Marine Corps thinking, planning, and action.

First, the Marine Corps must develop an active duty Civil Affairs primary MOS and career path. Training for CMO should begin at the entry level for officers and after the first term of enlistment for enlisted personnel. "Feeder" specialties should be identified that enhance the skills of the civil affairs specialist, such as communications, motor transport, combat engineer, etc. Providing sufficient MOS training and developing a career path for active duty Civil Affairs Marines will create highly experienced and skilled subject matter experts who are more capable

in providing CMO support to commanders. It will also contribute to developing a CMO mindset resident in the Marine Corps rather than treating it as an afterthought.

Second, the Marine Corps must create civil affairs staff positions/sections throughout the MAGTF with an emphasis in the near future on the maneuver battalions. The Marine Corps must also provide an additional similar type structure at the lower echelons of the logistics combat element (LCE). LCEs are bound to find themselves as the main effort with the ground combat element (GCE) in a supporting role during future irregular scenarios. This type of support relationship has been highlighted during humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations in which the LCE found itself heavily engaged with local populations while the GCE provided security. This can only be accomplished in tandem with the creation of an active duty primary MOS. Creating a permanent special staff section on the battalion staff will ensure that the commanders and planners can call upon professional CMO experts as opposed to part-time advisors and those called upon to learn the mission "on the job." It will also help ensure that civil considerations are made throughout the range of military operations rather than solely low intensity type operations. This will also aid the commander in employing civil affairs teams that are provided by the reserve CAGs and MEF detachments.

Third, the Marine Corps must create liaison positions starting at the staff non-commissioned officer and junior captain level within the Interagency, including State, the US Agency for International Development, etc. Selection for these billets should be competitive and career enhancing, similar to receiving Joint Staff Officer credit. Follow-on tours of duty should include assignment to provincial reconstruction teams, security cooperation activities, and high level joint planning staffs. Reserve Component Marines already resident within the interagency should be exploited and receive credit for filling Reserve liaison billets. Marines serving in the

interagency will be exposed to civil military approaches outside of the Marine Corps Planning Process in terms of complex problem solving. This will provide a link to civilian governmental subject matter experts who could be called upon to advise, train, and assist deployed Marine Corps units. Interagency tours will also provide future commanders, staff officers, and operations chiefs with additional tools regarding how to employ their CMO capabilities. There is currently no indication that the interagency is transforming itself to meet the expeditionary needs of future irregular scenarios. The Marine Corps will therefore not be able to rely on the interagency and must develop valuable resident knowledge of civil military approaches.

In the end, institutional adaptation and change has been a hallmark for the US Marine Corps. But it has also at times proved difficult. Hard decisions must be made. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps prides itself on overcoming challenges, intellectual as well as material. A necessary change for the future is the institutionalization of a CMO capability within the Marine Corps. Civil Military Operations apply to the irregular as well as traditional battlefields. Whichever form of warfare the United States becomes involved in, the Marine Corps will be there and will need every advantage possible to counter future threats.

## Endnotes

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<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Terlizzi, Civil Military Considerations Brief (Lecture, Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, Dec 1, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Colonel Doering, Irregular Warfare Introduction Seminar (Seminar, Command and Staff College, Countering Irregular Threats Elective, Quantico, VA, Jan 20, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> U. S. Department of the Navy, *2010 Force Structure Review* (Washington DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, March 14, 2011), 6.

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<sup>10</sup> Colonel Bryan Groves, "Reconstruction and Stabilization: Rome's Legacy and Information Sharing," Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, October 2009, <http://pksoi.army.mil/blog/archivedArticle.cfm?blog=PKSOI&id=48> (accessed January 22, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Ben Zweibelson, "The US in Afghanistan: Follow Sun Tzu rather than Clausewitz to Victory," Small Wars Journal 2010 <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/621-zweibelson.pdf>

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<sup>13</sup> Frontpiece, *Small Wars Manual* (1940; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1 April 1987).

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Defense, *Stability Operations*, Directive 3000.05, November, 28 2005, [http://www.usaid.gov/policy/cdie/sss06/sss\\_1\\_080106\\_dod.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/cdie/sss06/sss_1_080106_dod.pdf) (accessed January 11, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Department of Defense, *Stability Operations*, Instruction 3000.05, September 16, 2009, <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> (accessed January 11, 2011).

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<sup>19</sup> LtCol Chris Fears, Interview with the Marine Corps Combat Development Command Civil Affairs Advocate, Feb 7, 2011.

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